The Expediency of the CORONATION OATH, *and the peculiar Felicity of the* ENGLISH NATION:

A

SERMON,

PREACHED AT

St. VEDAST'S

FOSTER-LANE;

The *Sunday* after His MAJESTY'S

CORONATION.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE ſubſequent Diſcourſe, though never intended for the Preſs, is now publiſhed, rather to ſhew the Authour's Gratitude for the Manner in which it was received, than to make an Oſtentation of his Loyalty. As this is the firſt Diſcourſe compoſed by the Preacher after his Ordination, and was written amidſt the national Acclamations on the Day which His Majeſty was crowned, it is expected that Candour will overlook ſome few Defects, and that Charity will cover the Abundance of Faults, *with which this Piece may be charged.*

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PSAL. xxi. ver. 3.

Thou ſhalt prevent him with the Bleſſings of Goodneſs: And ſhalt ſet a Crown of pure Gold on his Head.

BEFORE the Raptures occaſioned by a late Solemnity have ſubſided, and the Bleſſings we expect from it, are become familiar to our Minds, I have thought it no improper Employment to revive the Joys which attended it, and to convince you, that our Pleaſure is founded upon Reaſon.

Permit me to premiſe, that the Pſalm from whence I have choſen the Subject of my Diſcourſe, is the Compoſition of a King, who was well acquainted with thoſe Qualities which caſt Splendour upon the regal

Office, and, though ſubject to ſome Errours, was the moſt illuſtrious Monarch that ever wore a Crown, or wielded a Sceptre. The rapturous Expreſſions, which this elegant Compoſition breathes, were occaſioned by a ſingular Victory, that *David* had obtained over his Enemies, and in that Reſpect, are not unſuitable to our preſent Circumſtances. He was well aſſured that the *Lord is the only Giver of Victory*, and on that Account, had prayed to him for the Succeſs with which his Arms had been crowned; *Thou haſt given him*, (ſays he,) *his Heart's Deſire, and haſt not denied him the Requeſt of his Lips.* Nay, ſo fully was he convinced of the Concurrence of the divine Goodneſs, with his juſt Endeavours to repreſs the Attacks of an implacable Enemy, that he immediately adds, in the Words of my Text, *Thou ſhalt prevent him with the Bleſſings of Goodneſs, and ſhalt ſet a Crown of pure Gold upon his Head*; or, according to the Force of the *Hebrew*, *Thou haſt prevented him with the Bleſſings of Good-*

neſs, and haſt ſet a Crown of pure Gold upon his Head.

Confidence without Grounds is Preſumption; but this was a Crime no ways chargeable upon the Pſalmiſt, who was humble on a Throne, temperate in a Court, void of Ambition, though certain of regal Pomp, and religious in the midſt of *a perverſe and ſtiff-necked Generation, who ſaid in their Hearts there was no God.* Hence he aſcribes his Triumphs to his Piety, and attributes the Favours of the Almighty to the Strength of his Faith. Thus after having confidently aſſerted, *that the Lord would grant him everlaſting Felicity, and make him glad with the Joy of his Countenance,* he immediately adds, that the Grounds of his Hope, and Reaſon of his Aſſurance was, *becauſe he put his Truſt in the Lord.*

Whoever compares theſe Particulars with our preſent Circumſtances, muſt confeſs, that the Application of our Text to the late Solemnity, is juſt, natural, and proper; and inſtead of being diſtorted, ſeems rather prophetic

phetic of the good Qualities of our King, and the triumphant State of our Nation.

As I ſeem already to have excited your Curioſity, I ſhall not keep it longer upon the Wrack, but beg your Attention to the following Propoſitions.

Firſt then, Let us conſider the Neceſſity of Society and Government, for the Support of our Species.

Secondly, Let us conſider the Reaſon for reſtraining Monarchs at the Time of their Coronation, by Oaths, which ſecure the Liberties and Religion of their Subjects.

Thirdly, Let us endeavour to diſplay the peculiar Happineſs of our Nation, in being ruled by his preſent Majeſty.

And *Laſtly*, Let us conclude with ſome practical Inferences, which concern us as the Subjects of ſo good, and ſo amiable a King.

The firſt Thing propoſed for our Conſideration, is the Neceſſity of Government for the Support of our Species. The

The many Frauds, Robberies, Violences, and Murders, which occur in our domeſtic Narratives, are a ſufficient Proof of the Truth of this Poſition.

But to aſſign the Grounds of this univerſal Depravity, is an Attempt of ſome Difficulty, and requires a profound Attention.

The wiſe Authour of our Being, conſidering that we are expoſed to Dangers, before our Reaſon is mature enough to guard againſt them, has implanted ſeveral Principles in our Nature, which ſupply its Abſence, and quicken its Operations. Among other Principles, that of Self-preſervation is the moſt neceſſary to ſupport our Species; and as *Aaron*'s Rod, when turned into a Serpent, *ſwallowed up thoſe of the Egyptians*, ſo this Principle ſwallows up every other. Reaſon was indeed given us to direct it in its Courſe, and controul it in its Exertion. But Reaſon is too often found a weak Guide, too often made a Miniſter to our Paſſions, and too often exerciſed in promoting thoſe Meaſures,

Meaſures, which it was intended, by the Authour of our Being, to ſuppreſs. The Irregularities reſulting from an undue Exerciſe of the Principle of Self-preſervation, when aſſiſted by ſuperiour Faculties, and greater corporal Abilities, rendered the Inſtitution of Society abſolutly neceſſary for the Security of private Property, and indeed for the very Support of our Species.

It is too general a Maxim among Mankind, even in their ſocial State, never to think they have ſufficiently provided for their own Safety, until they have deprived their Fellow-creatures of the Enjoyment of theirs; and in a State of Nature, where all Men are Equals, who ſhould dare to ſay to Injuſtice, or Rapine, or Plunder, *ſo far ſhalt thou go, and no further.*

The calm and ſoft Whiſpers of Reaſon are ſeldom heard in the Storms of Paſſion, and no other Method could be invented to ſecure the Produce of our Labours, and the Acquiſitions of our Study, but a general

Aſſociation

Aſſociation, wherein the Members ſhould ſubmit to have their Pretenſions determined by Law, and ſhould unanimouſly reſolve to turn their whole Power againſt the Violators of their Peace, the Enemies of their Happineſs, and the Adverſaries of their Lives.

The Neceſſity of ſuch an Aſſociation will appear ſtill farther, from the Neceſſity of human Laws, and from the Miſchiefs which immediately enſue from the Relaxation of their Sanctions, or from any Neglect in putting them into Execution. If Laws are neceſſary, if the putting them into Execution be neceſſary likewiſe, Perſons appointed for this Purpoſe are equally requiſite. To ſuppoſe every Perſon inveſted with a Power to put the Laws in Execution againſt his Enemy, would be to deſtroy the very Eſſence of Society, and to introduce all the Inconveniencies of a State of Nature, which Society is inſtituted in order to correct and remove.

It is very probable, that Mankind recurred, at firſt, for Aſſiſtance to ſuch whoſe Integrity and Sagacity, whoſe Wealth, and Strength, and Intereſt, were equal to that of the Oppreſſour. Succeſs in their Behalf might procure Veneration, Veneration might produce Authority, and the Perſon who had ſhown himſelf fit to be entruſted by one Perſon, might be choſen as a Protector by a ſecond, and every new Client become as an Encourager to another. It is eaſy to trace from this familiar Inſtance, the Neceſſity of Society, the Advantages reſulting from a well regulated State, and the Origin of Monarchy. But ſuch is the Condition of Mankind, ſuch the Perverſity of human Minds, that the very Thing intended for a Remedy, is often converted into a Poiſon, and the very Means intended for the Preſervation of our Species, have been abuſed to its Deſtruction !

This Inconvenience brings me, gradually, to my *Second* Propoſition, which was, *To ſhew the Reaſon for reſtraining Monarchs at the Time*

Time of their Coronation by Oaths, in order to ſecure the Liberties of the Subject.

Power is, in the beſt of Hands, intoxicating; but when it is intruſted with one who is naturally ambitious, it muſt neceſſarily be perverted. The nobleſt Minds are more expoſed to Ambition than any others, and it may be doubted, whether this ſoaring Principle, is not the *Lantern which lighted their Feet* through the Paths of Knowledge, and animated them in their Progreſs from Ignorance to Judgment, from Obſcurity to Fame, from Baſeneſs to Glory. But be that as it may, a Perſon of bad Morals inveſted with Power, is like a ravenous Wolf let looſe among a Flock of Sheep; a Perſon of great Talents and vicious Inclinations, in a high Station, reſembles the Character of the *Prince of the Power of the Air*, and may be compared to an all-devouring Fire, an irreſiſtible Deluge, and every Object which conveys Horror, and produces Fear. Hence we find, that all Nations who thought proper to limit the Power of

their Monarch, exacted certain Conceſſions before they admitted him to reign; and exalted him to his Throne, on certain Stipulations, which ſecured their Properties, reſtrained his Ambition, and contributed to introduce *Peace within their Walls*, at the ſame Time as it procured *Plentcouſneſs within their Palaces*.

If we turn over the Volumes of our own Hiſtory, we ſhall find, even in the Time of the *Druids*, that the Monarch was obliged by thoſe Sages, to conform to certain Conditions, in order to his being inveſted with the regal Dignity. The *Saxons*, from whom we have borrowed our preſent Conſtitution, always were obliged to ſubmit to a free Election of the People, and to condeſcend to give them this Aſſurance of their Safety. It is our peculiar Felicity, that we can trace the Form of this ſolemn Tie as far back as the Coronation of *Alfred*; I myſelf have ſeen it in Manuſcript, in one of our famous Repoſitories, and find it to be the Foundation of that which was lately taken by his preſent Majeſty.

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For though we acknowledge that there is no Power which is not derived from GOD, and ordained by him for the Benefit of Mankind, and the Preſervation of Society, accaccording to the Apoſtle's Advice, in the xiiith Chapter of the Epiſtle to the *Romans*, *Let every Soul be ſubject unto the higher Powers. For there is no Power but of God, the Powers that be are ordained of God.* Yet we are far from acknowledging in Kings a *Divine Right* of doing *amiſs*, or that GOD, who is infinite Mercy and Love, would commiſſion any Perſon to deprive Men of their Liberties, and their Privileges as Men. Brought into the World in the ſame Manner, all Men are equal: Superiority is a Preſent, not a natural Gift; and thoſe who are inveſted with a Power of beſtowing Authority, muſt be ſuppoſed likewiſe to be endued with the Right of limiting the Conditions on which they confer it, as well as a Power of reſuming it when it is abuſed. This is but equitable, it is reaſonable, it is neceſſary.

But it is Time for me to proceed to my *Third* Propoſition, which is, *To diſplay the peculiar*

peculiar Felicity of the Nation in the Government of his preſent Majeſty. I am convinced I am now entering into an ample Field, and am more diſtreſſed for want of Time, than for Want of Matter; yet when I conſider the Place wherein I ſtand, I find myſelf under great Reſtraints, and obliged to utter nothing which ſhall ſound like Flattery, or bear the leaſt Appearance of Detraction.

If we examine the peculiar Characteriſtic of this Nation, we ſhall find it to be always jealous of its Rights, and always ſuſpicious of a Prince born out of its Dominions. This Cauſe of Jealouſy and Suſpicion can find no Place in our preſent Monarch: Born in *Britain*, "he gloriesin a Heart entirely Britiſh;" can have no Intereſt inconſiſtent with that of his People, and can promiſe himſelf no Security but in their Welfare.

It is generally obſerved, that we are more fond of the Place of our Nativity than any other; we are prejudiced in its Favour, we

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are zealous to promote its Intereſts in Preference to thoſe of any other, and eſteem it our Glory to be born within its narrow Boundaries. This natural Prejudice, operates in our Favour, with reſpect to his preſent Majeſty; he is our Countryman, as well as our King; and if prejudiced, muſt be prejudiced in our Favour. Hence it is, that Faction is loſt in Loyalty, and there is no other Emulation among us, but that of ſhewing our Love to our Country, in the Method which can beſt demonſtrate our Affection to our King. The Manner in which he began his Reign prejudices us in his Favour, and renders Envy unable to call in the Aid of Cenſure, and Malice itſelf unwilling to expoſe herſelf by flagrant Calumny, or unreaſonable Reproach. The Rebukes given to Vice by his Proclamation, the Encouragements ſhewn to Virtue by his Example, the Favour beſtowed on Learning by his Bounties, and the Countenance with which the Religious are received, make us entertain Hopes, that his Reign may be long, and force us to pray that it may be happy.

happy. Oeconomy, ſo neceſſary in the Government of a commercial State, receives Dignity by his Alterations, which declares that every Burden on his Subjects, is a grievous Load on himſelf, that nothing but Humanity could extort, nothing but Neceſſity could compel him to. The Regard he has for the Reputation of our Arms, and the Welfare of our State, has ſhewn itſelf in his continuing the War begun by his Grandſire, and the Succeſs with which the *God of Hoſts* has favoured his Attempts, not only makes the Beginning of his Reign auſpicious, but likewiſe gives us Grounds to believe that God *is our Shield*, and that our Cauſe is founded on Juſtice. The Oaths which ſome of our former Kings have taken at their Coronation, have been ſlender Ties, too ſlender Ties! burſt by Ambition, and broken aſunder by ſelfiſh Views. But the Experience we have of our preſent Monarch convinces us, that he has *not ſo learned Chriſt*, and that the ſolemn Tie he is bound with, will *be the ſame to Day, and Yeſterday, and for ever*.

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The prudent Choice which he has made of his royal Conſort, wherein every Claim was obliged to give Way to Merit, and every Pretenſion could have no Recommendation but from pure and manly Religion, gives us Grounds to expect that his domeſtic Peace will be uninterrupted, and that the Matrimonial State will retrieve its Splendour, and become the Faſhion, even among thoſe who have indulged themſelves in Libertiniſm, and lived in Practices againſt which our holy Religion has denounced everlaſting Torments.

Theſe are ſome of the Bleſſings we have already experienced from the Beginnings of the Reign of our King; as his Wiſdom grows mature by Age and Experience, we may expect greater Things; and while he hearkens to the Advice of Wiſdom, and continues in the Courſe in which he has begun, we need not doubt the Completion of our Wiſhes.

It has been a general and true Obſervation, that the Manners of the Court, tranſ-

fuſe themſelves among the Nobility, and are by them delivered down to the loweſt Dregs of the People. Hence, it has often happened, that Kings have been the *nurſing Fathers* of Vice; and the univerſal Depravation of a Kingdom, may be traced upwards to the Court as its immediate Source and Original. But Thanks to Providence this is not our caſe! Our Sovereign, like David, has *declared* that *he will not know a wicked Perſon.* Let not the Libertine, therefore, any longer boaſt in the Charms and external Splendour of Vice. Sin is now baniſhed from the Court, and he that would pleaſe his King, muſt walk *in the Commandments of the Lord blameleſs.* Gaming receives no Countenance from the Smiles of Majeſty, nor can Vice find an Aſylum in his Palace. Grave, and decent, and frequent in the *Court of the Lord*, he ſhews us the Beauty of Holineſs; and Wickedneſs is now ſo much out of Faſhion, that it is both courtly and royal to be Good. The Prodigal receives a bitter Check from the Oeconomy of his King; the Debauchee ſees his illicit Pleaſures put

to open Shame, by his Nuptials; the Indolent and Careleſs, find themſelves reproved by his Diligence and Application to Buſineſs; the Undutiful are taught Obedience by the Duty he pays to his royal Parent, and the Obſtinate and Conceited Prudence, by the Regard he ſhews to the Wiſdom of his Counſellors. The late Promotions he has made, teach the Affluent the Glory of encouraging Merit; and the Moderation he has ſhewn to Chriſtians of all Perſuaſions, convinces us, that he is acquainted with the true Spirit of Chriſtianity. The Conſtancy he has ſhewn in maintaining the Rights of his Subjects in his Treaties with a ſubtle Enemy, convince us that he deſerves to be ſtiled the Father of his People; and the Vigour with which he has proſecuted the War, gives us full Aſſurance, that when Peace, like *Noah's Dove* ſhall *return with the Olive-branch*, the Waters of civil Diſcord muſt be abated, and the Voice of War *ſhall not ſoon be heard in our Streets.*

If we could act above ourſelves, and imitate Kings, as much in the Purity of our Morals, as

in the external Vanities of their Dreſs and Pomp, it is our Happineſs, that the royal Example calls upon us, and provokes us to be zealous in our Devotions, dutiful to our Parents, affectionate to our Relations, chaſte in our Diſpoſitions, frugal in our domeſtic Expences, Enemies to Riot, candid to thoſe who differ from us in religious Sentiments, and Promoters of Peace, Quiet, Virtue, Religion, and Happineſs, to the Extent of our Abilities.

Nothing now remains, but to reduce what has been ſaid, to ſuch Maxims as may influence our Practice.—Let us then remember, that as *King's are God's Miniſters*, they are the Objects of our Veneration, and demand our Obedience. Hence, every petulant Claim to ſuperiour Knowledge in the Myſteries of Government, every groundleſs Clamour againſt Meaſures, which we do not underſtand, argues not only Weakneſs but Wickedneſs, and is a direct Contradiction to a poſitive Command of God, contrary to an expreſs Injunction of his Apoſtle, and

oppoſite

oppoſite to the very Example of our bleſſed Saviour, who wrought a Miracle to ſhew the Reſpect he bore to thoſe in Authority, and always was ready to render unto *Cæſar the Things which are Cæſar's*.

Kings, as Men, are liable to Errours, but he ſhould be more than a Man, who undertakes to judge of the Motives of all their Actions, and pretends from a few Facts, to deſcribe their general Character.

We art ſet at too great a Diſtance from the Springs of Government to be Judges of their Operations, and what we do not underſtand, we may wiſely confeſs we do not know; but to find Fault with what is above our Comprehenſion, is as abſurd as it would be for a blind Man to diſpraiſe a particular Colour.

To flatter Monarchs in their Vices, is perhaps more dangerous to a State, than to detract from their Virtues; both are pernicious, and both ſhould be avoided. In being guilty of the former Vice, we encou-

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rage them in doing all the Evil they can; and in being guilty of the latter, put it out of their Power to do all the Good they would. It is therefore our Intereſt to approach the Throne without the Incenſe of Flattery, or the Scourge of Detraction: It is our Intereſt to ſubmit to public Meaſures, when calculated for the general Good, though private Intereſt falls a Sacrifice. It is our Intereſt to refrain from every Meaſure which can any ways clog the Wheels of Government, and to ſhew our Wiſdom, our Allegiance, and our Piety at the ſame time; for it is the peculiar Felicity of our Conſtitution, that we can reconcile our civil and religious Duties, and *fear God*, at the ſame time that we *honour the King*.

The Welfare of our Nation, muſt conſiſt in the Unanimity and mutual Harmony between the KING and his Subjects; every Diminution of which ſhould be deemed a *breaking of the three-fold Cord*, which ought not *to be broken*, and *a dividing of that which* GOD *hath joined*, with a View that *no Man ſhould put aſunder*. Inſtead then

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of *deſpiſing Dominion, and ſpeaking evil of Dignities, inſtead of reviling the Gods, and curſing the Rulers of the People, let us,* as the Apoſtle adviſes us, *make Supplications, Prayers, and Interceſſions, and give Thanks for all Men, and eſpecially for Kings, and all that are in Authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable Life in all Godlineſs and Honeſty, for this is good and acceptable in the Sight of* GOD *our Saviour*; and as the Scripture farther adviſes us, *let all the People ſay,* as *Iſrael* did when *Solomon* was anointed, GOD SAVE THE KING. *Amen,* and *Amen.*

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